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Contact: **Andrew M. Sherman**
202-512-1991
asherman@gpo.gov
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SECOND BIENNIAL REPORT ON GPO ACCESS NOW AVAILABLE

Report to Congress evaluates success of innovative service

The second Biennial Report to Congress on the Status of **GPO Access** is currently available from the Government Printing Office (GPO). The report was transmitted to Congress December 31, 1999, in accordance with section 4103 of Title 44, U.S.C. It is available on GPO Access at **www.gpo.gov/biennialreport**.

According to the report, the information resources on **GPO Access**, covering all three branches of Government, now feature more than 1,300 databases through over 80 applications, including the *Congressional Record* and all major congressional publications, the *Federal Register* and *Code of Federal Regulations*, Supreme Court decisions, and other key Government documents.

The databases also include such noteworthy publications as *Investigating the Year 2000 Problem: The 100 Day Report* from the U.S. Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem; the *Report of the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China*, also known as the Cox Report; and the "*Findings of Fact*" in the Government's case against Microsoft.

As of November 1999, the Web site provided access to more than 104,000 titles on GPO servers and over 62,000 additional titles through links to other Federal agency web sites. Recent statistics indicate that **GPO Access** fulfills approximately 21 million document retrievals per month, with more than 228 million retrievals during fiscal year 1999 alone.

Since the last *Biennial Report* in 1997, GPO has redesigned and reorganized **GPO Access**, developed a plan for permanent public access, added new applications and publications, improved document searches and retrievals, and facilitated its indexing by

Internet search engines and directories. The service has also introduced the “online bookstore” for GPO’s sales publications, a site-search capability, a privacy and security notice, a creative web site for kids, a help page, and exit pages. In addition, with the increasing public use of **GPO Access**, system enhancements have been made to handle web site traffic more quickly and efficiently.

The report notes that the cost of **GPO Access** has been much lower than was originally estimated by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in the legislation creating the system (Pub. L. 103–40). CBO estimated that creating and operating the online system would cost approximately \$6 million in appropriated funds over the first 5 years. In addition, CBO said the provision of free online access to Federal depository libraries would cost another \$2 million to \$10 million per year in appropriated funds. In fact, the total cost of **GPO Access** has been \$12.9 million since it began operations in 1994—20 percent less than the lowest estimate and 77 percent under the higher estimate. GPO is seeking additional funding from Congress for FY 2001 to expand and improve **GPO Access** services.

The report cites high levels of customer satisfaction with **GPO Access**, noting that in 1999, the system was selected as one of the top 50 legal research web sites for the year by *Law Office Computing magazine*, and was named best research site for laws and best Government site overall by the newsletter *legal.online*. It was chosen as the first recipient of the American Association of Law Libraries Public Access to Government Information Award. Also in 1999, GPO and the Department of Energy jointly won a Hammer Award from Vice President Gore’s National Performance Review for an innovative partnership that makes thousands of DOE scientific and technical reports available to the public free of charge over **GPO Access**.

In 1998, **GPO Access** was named one of the 15 “Best Feds on the Web” by Vice President Gore and *Government Executive* magazine. *Federal Computer Week* magazine said, “the GPO site stands out as an unassuming, information-rich offering.” The internationally recognized management firm of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc., called **GPO Access** “one of the Federal Government’s largest and most active web sites” and said that the site “has been highly successful in making Government information easily available to the public.”

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